From: J J Simas
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I have been following Microsoft's business methods for some time. And as a graduate of both Computer Science and Philosophy, I have excellent qualifications for opining on this settlement. I'll leave the arguments and details up to someone who is more knowledgeable of law but what needs to happen is the following.

First let me state what is true:

Software and hardware exist at certain levels.

The lowest level is hardware.
Above that are hardware drivers.
Above that is the operating system.
Above that are the applications.
Above the applications are more applications...

That is, each higher level, makes use the lower level.

Then what needs to happen:

What needs to happen is to require any company that makes products at more than one adjacent level to publicly document their application programming interface. This isn't a drain on resources for them because if they are developing at both levels, then they have already produced the documentation. This ensures that competition can exist even in the presence of a monopoly.

File formats must also be open not only to ensure competition (which will ensure the best products survive which helps ensure that we survive) but also so that our data isn't taken away from us. If our data is in a file with a proprietary format, and if the software publisher isn't the only person knowledgeable of that format, then that person can demand whatever price so that we can access our data and that publisher being the only person who knows the format can disallow us from transferring our data to any other format.

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